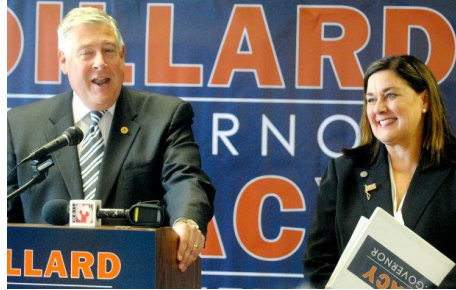




## DOC takes issue with Tracy's comments: Lt. gov. candidate spoke locally Thursday



Illinois Sen. Kirk Dillard of Hinsdale, a Republican candidate for governor, introduces state Rep. Jil Tracy of Mt. Sterling as his running mate at the Williamson County Regional Airport on Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2013. This is the first year gubernatorial and lieutenant governor candidates will run on the same ticket. (Adam Testa / The Southern)

**January 28, 2014 By Pete Spitler**

Illinois Department of Corrections takes issue with some of the claims made by Kirk Dillard's lieutenant governor candidate Jil Tracy, who spoke Thursday in Murphysboro.

Tracy said inmate transfers from the closed Tamms Correctional Center has "greatly jeopardized the safety of the over 10,000 staff who work within the correctional system."

Not true, according to IDOC Director of Communications Tom Shaer.

"First of all, the department has not jeopardized the safety of any of its employees by inmate transfers or any other action," Shaer said. "She refers to Menard (Correctional Center) and did not do her research, because only seven Tamms inmates went to Menard, and they've had no impact there."

"The majority went to Pontiac (Correctional Center) and the warden there reports that Pontiac has had only had three serious incidents involving Tamms inmates."

Shaer also disputed Tracy's claim that Tamms was a "safety valve" for the state's overcrowded prison system.

**(MORE)**

“Tamms served no such function and was closed because it was not needed,” Shaer said. “Its closing would have no impact on the safety and security of Illinois prisons and that has been proven true.”

Shaer said the closing of Tamms, Dwight Correctional Center, Murphysboro Youth Center and Carbondale’s Southern Illinois Adult Transition Center is saving the state \$5.83 million per month with an overall prison population of 48,540.

Shaer also said that a misconception exists regarding the Department of Corrections’ inmate capacity. The 33,000 figure that Tracy referred to during her news conference originated from a time when prisons housed one inmate per cell, a practice not used today.

“Serious assaults on staff at Illinois prisons are down,” Shaer said. “Overall serious assaults were down 35 percent in the last fiscal year.”

[pete.spitler@thesouthern.com](mailto:pete.spitler@thesouthern.com)